

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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R 261630Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6826

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: PRO-PANAMA RESOLUTION BARELY FAILS TO PASS

1. A SENSE OF THE CHAMBER MOTION EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE DEMANDS OF PANAMA IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES WAS SHELVED AFTER A LENGTHY DEBATE ON A 26-24 VOTE IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES APRIL 23. THE MOTION WAS SPRUNG UNEXPECTEDLY ON THE CHAMBER BY ALBERTO SABORIO, A FLAMBOYANT LEFT-LEANING CONSERVATIVE, WHO SOUGHT TO PORTRAY THE ISSUE AS ONE OF LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY VERSUS IMPERIALISM. NEARLY HALF OF THE 23 CONSERVATIVES PRESENT (FIVE ABSENCES) SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE RESOLUTION, ALTHOUGH WITH WIDELY VARYING DEGREES OF VEHEMENCE AND JUSTIFICATION. MANY ATTEMPTED TO STIPULATE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A VOTE FOR PANAMA IN NO WAY COMPROMISED THEIR FRIENDSHIP FOR THE UNITED STATES. ON THE LIBERAL SIDE OF THE 27 MEMBERS PRESENT (15 ABSENCES) ONLY TWO MEMBERS VOCALLY OPPOSED THEM MOTION, ON PROCEDURAL AND LEGALISTIC GROUNDS, (E.G. THE RESOLUTION OUGHT TO BE CONVEYED TO THE PANAMANIAN PARLIAMENT, BUT THERE IS NO SUCH BODY.) THREE SPOKE IN FAVOR OF IT FROM THE

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FLOOR, AND IN A RARE BREACH OF PARTY SOLIDARITY, VETERAN LIBERAL

DEPUTY VICTOR MANUEL TALAVERA FINALLY VOTED IN FAVOR. ONLY SOME FAST-STEPPING PARLIAMENTARY TACTICS AT THE LAST MINUTE ENABLED THE LIBERALS TO KILL THE MOTION INSTEAD OF REFERRING IT TO THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR MORE AMPLE DEBATE ON ITS MERITS.

2. OPPOSITION LA PRENSA, WHOSE REPORTERS WRE PRESUMABLY LOOKING THE OTHER WAY THEN THE ABOVE OCCURRED, PROMINENTLY REPORTED IN ITS APRIL 24 EDITION THAT THE MOTION HAD BEEN APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE BY THE CHAMBER, AND SENT TO A COMMITTEE FOR POLISHING.

3.COMMENT: THE CLOSENESS OF THE VOTE, THE LACK OF ZEST IN THE LIBERAL SIDE OF THE DEBATE AND THE DEFECTION OF TALAVERA (WHO HAS SOMETHING OF A HISTORY OF ABANDONING THE PARTY ON SUCH ISSUES), GAVE THE CONSERVATIVES ONE OF THEIR RARE MOMENTS OF SATISFACTION IN THEIR PARLIAMENTARY PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH MOST CONSERVATIVES SEEM SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE IN PRESSING THE LIBERALS ON DEMAGOGIC INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, THE SPECTACLE OF ACUTE LIBERAL DISCOMFITURE IN FIELDING SUCH HOT POTATOES MIGHT ENCOURAGE THEM TO RESORT TO IT MORE IN THE FUTURE.

SHELTON

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